

REMARKS

The application has been amended and is believed to be in condition for allowance.

Applicants acknowledge with appreciation that claims 1-4, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13 and 14 have been allowed.

Claims 5-6, 9, 12 and 15 have been rejected as anticipated by WU et al. 6,184,061.

The essence of the rejection is that WU et al. inherently disclose an intermetallic compound layer with a botryoidal surface formed on the solder layer's side.

See that WU et al. teach that the Ni-P layer 22 is a diffusion prevention layer for preventing copper, which is the material of pad 20, from diffusing. See the last sentence of column 4.

As per specification page 13, according to the present invention, a botryoidal intermetallic compound composed mainly of tin and copper, further including nickel, has been formed on the interface surface between the solder layer and the nickel layer.

In the reference, there will be no copper as the copper has been blocked by diffusion prevention film 22. Accordingly, even if the recited botryoidal surface is formed in the WU et al. structure, such a surface does not include the materials recited in the rejected independent claims. That is, the surface will not comprise tin, copper and nickel.

For these reasons, these claims are believed to be allowable. See that from each of the independent claims 5, 9, 12 and 15, there is a new dependent claim that recites the solder layer as comprising tin, silver and copper. These claims are also believed to be independently patentable.

In view of the above, applicants believe that the present application is in condition for allowance and an early indication of the same is respectfully requested.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 25-0120 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17.

Respectfully submitted,

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